

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 IO-10 SCCT-01 ACDA-05 CIAE-00

NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OPR-02

DHA-02 /076 W

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O R 210101Z DEC 75 ZFF-4

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3879

INFO DIA DOD WASHDC

USCINCSO

AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 8294

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MILLAR

SUBJECT: AIR FORCE REVOLT: SITREP NO. 10

1. IN BIZARRE EPISODE THIS AFTERNOON AF ELEMENTS LOYAL TO AF CINC AGOSTI BOMBED AND STRAFED MORON AIR BASE. ATTACK CAME AFTER DAY OF INTENSE DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN AGOSTI AND REBEL OFFICERS. AGOSTI REPORTEDLY ASSURED OFFICERS THAT SINCE THREE CINC'S ARE ALREADY INSISTING ON FULL POLITICAL SOLUTION--I.E. INCLUDING MRS. PERON'S OUSTER, THERE NO LONGER ANY REASON FOR AF REBELLION; RATHER, AF OFFICERS SHOULD NOW ALL ACCEPT DISCIPLINE OF THEIR INSTITUTIONS AND GET BEHIND NEW CINC. ASSURANCES OBVIOUSLY WERE CONVINCING, FOR COMMANDERS OF ALL BASES (E.G. MENDOZA, VILLA REYNOLDS, ETC) EXCEPT MORON ADD AEROPARQUE ENDED THEIR REBELLION AND GAVE SUPPORT TO AGOSTI. BRIGADIER CAPELLINI, WHO HOLDS MORON AND AEROPARQUE, HOWEVER, REFUSED. AFTER BRIEF MEETING WITH CAPELLINI THIS AFTERNOON, AGOSTI ANNOUNCED THAT IN VIEW OF FAILURE OF NEGOTIATIONS, HE

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WAS ORDERING ALL LOYAL TROOPS IMMEDIATELY TO EVACUATE MORON. AT

3 P.M., IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT SINCE TIME LIMIT HAD LAPSED, "RE-PRESSIVE" ACTION WOULD BEGIN AGAINST MORON. THOSE STILL THERE WOULD BE CONSIDERED TO BE REBELS. MORON WAS ATTACKED BY COMBAT AIRCRAFT SHORTLY THEREAFTER (APPARENTLY MIRAGES FROM NEARBY MORENO). ATTACK WAS APPARENTLY DESIGNED MAINLY TO INTIMIDATE, BUT AT LEAST ONE AIRCRAFT ON RUNWAY A T-34 MENTOR, WAS SET ABLAZE. THERE WERE NO CASUALTIES RESULTING FROM ATTACK - NOR HAVE THERE BEEN ANY DURING THE ENTIRE REBELLION.

2. CAPELLINI MEANWHILE HAD ANNOUNCED THAT IF ATTACKED HE WOULD RETALIATE BY BOMBING CASA ROSADA. THIS SENT MRS. PERON AND OTHER OFFICIALS SCURRYING TO BASEMENT. MRS. PERON REPORTED HAD ATTACK OF NERVES AND DOCTOR HAD TO BE SUMMONED TO ATTEND HER. SHE NEED NOT HAVE BEEN SO CONCERNED, FOR THE BEST OF DAO'S KNOWLEDGE, CAPELLINI HAS NO COMBAT AIRCRAFT AVAILABLE TO HIM AT MORON TO CARRY OUT HIS THREAT, ALTHOUGH T-34'S DO HAVE 2.30 CAL MACHINE GUNS.

3. AT ABOUT 5:30 P.M. AGOSTI ANNOUNCED THAT REPRESSIVE MEASURES WOULD BE SUSPENDED BRIEFLY TO ALLOW NEW NEGOTIATIONS WITH CAPELLINI. THESE TALKS ALSO SFAILED, HOWEVER, WITH CAPELLINI STILL REFUSING TO CAPITULATE. AS OF 9 P.M., THEREFORE, NEW ACTIONS ARE EXPECTED AGAINST MORON. UNCONFIRMED REPORTS ALSO INDICATE AF GROUND UNITS ARE BEING POSITIONED TO ATTACK REBEL FORCES STILL HOLDING AEROPARQUE. HOPEFULLY, HOWEVER, NEW NEGOTIATIONS DURING THE NIGHT MAY DEFUSE THE SITUATION.

4. WHILE ARMED CONFLICT WITHIN AF ADDS BIZARRE AND UNFORTUNATE NOTE TO DEVELOPMENTS, IT DOES NOT ALTER OVERALL SITUATION DESCRIBED IN EARLIER SITREPS (SEE SITREP NO. 7). THREE CINCS REPORTEDLY REMAIN DETERMINED THAT MRS. PERON MUST GO AS PART OF ANY SOLUTION. THEY, HOWEVER, ARE STILL PUSHING FOR A SOLUTION WHICH WOULD LEAVE POWER IN CIVILIAN HANDS--I.E. MRS. PERON WOULD LEAVE BUT PRESIDENCY WOULD THEN PASS TO LUDER OR TO ANOTHER ELIGIBLE CIVILIAN. CAPELLINI, ON OTHER HAND, REPORTEDLY CONTINUES TO DEMAND AN OUT-RIGHT MILITARY TAKEOVER, WITH A GENERAL IN THE CASA ROSADA. THIS, PLUS AGOSTI'S FELT NEED TO IMPOSE INSTITUTIONAL DISCIPLINE AND ASSERT HIS LEGITIMATE AUTHORITY, IS THE CRUX OF CONFLICT WITH CAPELLINI. ACTION AGAINST LATTER AND HIS FOLLOWERS AT MORON, THEN, DOES NOT REPRESENT EFFORT ON PART OF ARMED FORCES TO DEFEND MRS. PERON AGAINST REBELS. ON CONTRARY, ALL ARE IN AGREEMENT ON ONE POINT: CONFIDENTIAL

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MRS. PERON MUST GO. THEIR DISAGREEMENT IS OVER WHO (AND WHAT) SHOULD REPLACE HER--AND OVER WHO IS IN AUTHORITY IN THE AIR FORCE.

5. IN A DISTURBING INCIDENT GROWING OUT OF THE AGOSTI-CAPELLINI CONFLICT, HADRLINE ARMY GENERAL MUJICA THIS AFTERNOON ISSUED STATEMENT SAYING ARMED ACTION AGAINST MORON SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN. ARMY CINC VIDELA HAS CALLED ON MUJICA TO EXPLAIN HIS STATEMENTS. DISCIPLINARY ACTION COULD RESULT. IMPLICATIONS FOR POSSIBLE DISUNITY IN

THE ARMY ARE SERIOUS, SINCE MUJICA DOES HAVE A NUMBER OF SYMPATHIZERS IN ARMY EVEN THOUGH HE DOES NOT AT MOMENT HAVE TROOP COMMAND. THERE ARE, IN SHORT SOME ARMY GENERALS WITH TROOP COMMANDS WHO MAY FEEL AS MUJICA DOES AND BE TEMPTED TO MOVE. IN FACT, THERE IS PROBABLY STILL A GREAT DEGREE OF LOYALTY FOR MUJICA WITHIN THE AIRBORNE BRIGADE AS CORDOBA. IF CAPELLINI REPRESENTS RIGHT-WING NATIONALISTS IN AIR FORCE, THERE ARE LIKE-MINDED OFFICERS IN ARMY. SO FAR, VIDELA HAD HELD THEM IN LINE. MUJICA'S INDISCIPLINE MAY MAKE IT A LITTLE HARDER. ALSO, IF ARMY'S SOLIDARITY BEGINS TO CRUMBLE, WAVERING NAVY AND AF COMMANDERS MAY REASSESS THEIR POSITIONS.

DAO SOURCES INDICATE FOR EXAMPLE, THAT BRIGADIER MONTESANO, COMMANDER OF IMPORTANT FIRST AIR BRIGADE AT PALOMAR AIR BASE, IS SUPPORTING AIR FORCE COMMANDER AGOSTI OVER THE OBJECTION OF MANY OF HIS SENIOR STAFF OFFICERS.

6. COMMENT: SINCE CAPELLINI HAS NO COMBAT AIRCRAFT AND HIS GROUND UNITS ARE OUTNUMBERED, HIS POSITION, IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS IS UNTENABLE UNLESS HE RECEIVES SUPPORT. EVEN IF RESOLVED IN NEXT FEW HOURS, EPISODE IS UNFORTUNATE, FOR IT HAS GIVEN IMPRESSION THAT ARMED FORCES ARE NOT UNITED. AS ONE DISGUSTED CITIZEN REMARKED TO EMBOFF THIS AFTERNOON: "WE EXPECTED ARMED FORCES TO SAVE THE COUNTRY FROM ANARCHY, NOT GIVE US COMIC OPERAS." THIS MAY BE AN OVERLY PESSIMISTIC VIEW, BUT AT MOMENT IT IS AN UNDERSTANDABLE ONE.
HILL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SITREP, BOMBER AIRCRAFT, MILITARY BASES, AIR COMBAT OPERATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 DEC 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BUENOS08294
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750443-0630
From: BUENOS AIRES
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751222/aaaaaswe.tel
Line Count: 140
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 SEP 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 SEP 2003 by ellisoob>; APPROVED <18 DEC 2003 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AIR FORCE REVOLT: SITREP NO. 10
TAGS: PINT, MILI, AR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006